



CARSON CITY

Watchdog Group: Nevadans' Rights Limited by State Opinion

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An environmental watchdog group claims a new attorney general's opinion favors big business and would eliminate the rights of most Nevadans to challenge state agency decisions.

The opinion by Attorney General George Chanos had been requested by the Nevada Environmental Commission after a state agency cited a new law in trying to limit efforts by Great Basin Mine Watch to stop pollution from an old gold mine from reaching the north fork of the Humboldt River.

The commission plans to resume its hearing on the Big Springs Mine on July sixth. The watchdog group is challenging the way in which the state Division of Environmental Protection is monitoring the mine, located in Elko County.

Chanos says the 2005 law change limits appeals in such cases only to those with a financial stake in the outcome.

Nicole Rinke of the Western Mining Action Project is working with Great Basin Mine Watch on the mine issue. She says the opinion "would essentially eliminate the public's right to challenge decisions made by state agencies."

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